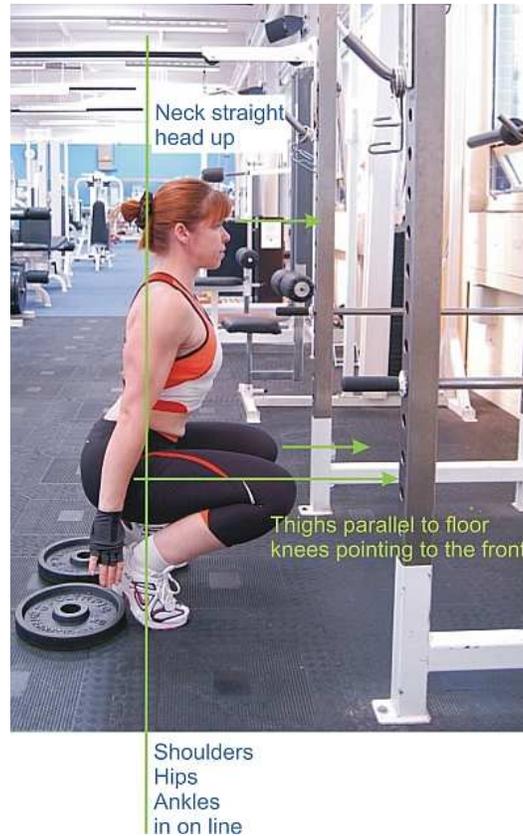


Exercise Guide for a Sublime Appearance!

Squats - Set Up



The problem with this exercise is the feet. Only very few adults are able to keep their feet flat on the ground when squatting. So you will need something to put under the heels. For my taste it could even be a bit higher than the weight plates. In order to have the ankles as flexible as possible, do some calf stretches at the beginning. And always do some squats without weight to get used to the posture and to check that you have all the lines and angles right.

I have my knees and toes pointing forward. Some people (like Detlef) have the knees and toes pointing outward. You will have to try this out.

But **most importantly**: During the exercise the **direction of the knees is NOT supposed to change**.

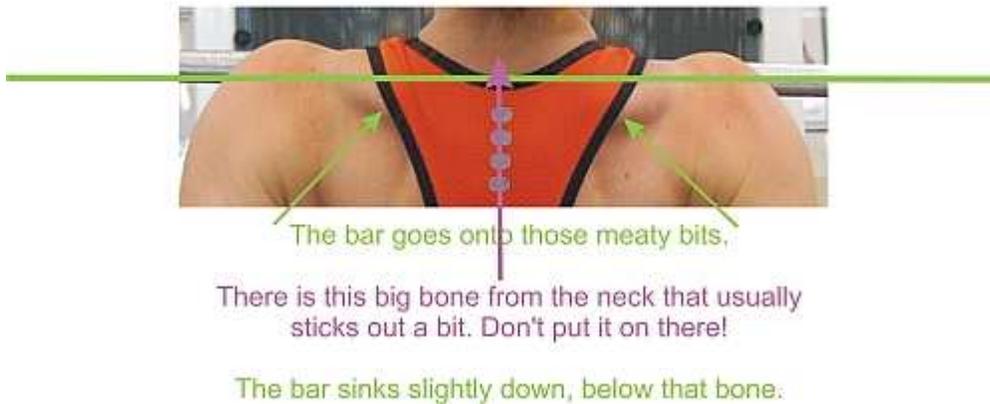
During the 'UP' phase it is too tempting to squeeze the knees together and to wiggle with the bum: DON'T! This is a killer for the knees. If you have to do that, then either your weight is too heavy, you did one repetition too many, or you are not clenching your buttocks enough.

So here are the numbers:

Squats - For Buttocks and Quadriceps																			
Number of sets:	<p>Everybody</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No weight • calf stretch <p>Beginners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 warmup • 3 sets <p>Advanced:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 warmup • 4-5 sets 																		
Number of repetitions:	<p>Warmup: 10 light weight (50%)</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Set</th> <th>Repetitions</th> <th>Weight</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>8-10</td> <td>comfortable (80%)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2</td> <td>6-10</td> <td>up (100%)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3</td> <td>6-8</td> <td>same or up (100%)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4</td> <td>6-8 or 4-6</td> <td>same or up (100%)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5</td> <td>4-6 or 8-10 (burn out)</td> <td>- same or up (100%) - reduce (80%)</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>I'm keeping the number or repetitions deliberately flexible.</p> <p>This is a huge muscle which can take a lot of weight. But the back and the shoulders have to hold it, so the first heavier set works as an additional warm up. The weight should be low enough that in the next set you can raise it.</p> <p>This is one of the exercises where the weight will go up by each set because the smaller (holding) muscles get warm and get used to the weight.</p> <p>And it depends a lot on the shape of the day. This exercise is intense on the heart rate and sometimes one just doesn't have the strength.</p> <p>Sometimes if I'm really good with heavy weight in the 4 th set I would then use lighter weight in the 5th set to make more reps in order to really kill the muscle (make it burn).</p>	Set	Repetitions	Weight	1	8-10	comfortable (80%)	2	6-10	up (100%)	3	6-8	same or up (100%)	4	6-8 or 4-6	same or up (100%)	5	4-6 or 8-10 (burn out)	- same or up (100%) - reduce (80%)
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Duration:	<p>20 - 25 minutes</p> <p>you will need rather big breaks to get the heart rate down. Walk around a bit.</p>																		
Progress:	<p>10 is absolute cut off.</p> <p>Stay with your start weight as long as you like. It is supposed to make you feel safe and become flexible. Even if you can do more, stick with 10 repetitions. Only raise it if the gap between the weight for the 1st and 2nd set becomes too big.</p> <p>Even the 8 reps for the 3rd and 4th set are a lot. I have more endurance in the back than strength, so it is easier for me to do more reps than heavier ones. If you can handle the weight with your back go with the 4-6 recommendation from the 3rd set on.</p>																		

From Up to Down and Up again!

Squats - Where to put the weight?



Gyms with free weights usually have squat racks. The bar should be located at the right height, a bit lower than the shoulders. Sometimes there are round cushions to put around the bar for the neck. I always fold a towel twice and hang it over the bar.

Have your heel support in place a good step behind the bar.



Set yourself up

Stand between the heel support and the bar facing it. Dive under the bar, position the meaty bits of the upper back against the towel/cushions and grab the bar without lifting it. No need to clench. The elbows work like a spring, pressing the bar against your neck. Position both feet in line under the bar, clench the buttocks, tilt the pelvis forward to straighten the lower back and lift the bar just some millimeters from the rack to feel if it is balanced.

If it feels good, take a deep breath in and stand upright while breathing out - now with the bar freely on your back.

Step back, get on your heel support and adjust until you feel safe.

The reps

Breathing is essential here. When you go **down**, breathe **in**, when going **up** breathe **out**.

Clench the buttocks, straighten the back and go down while breathing in. The Shoulders, hips and ankles are almost lined up during the whole motion. Go so deep that the thighs are parallel to the floor. You will feel your tummy muscles pressing against the thighs.

That's the signal to move up again. Flex the buttocks as hard as you can, lift the head a bit to shift the chest up, and at the same time straighten the legs while shifting the pelvis forward. It is a bit as if you would be using the bar to pull yourself up.

In the last picture of the above series you can see that the head is raised (and in the bigger version you could see that it is getting red), the chest is pointing up a bit more and the bum is shifted forward. This is the very beginning of the 'up' movement in which the breathing is 'on hold' to create pressure in the tummy to help pressing upward. A few centimeters further up I will start breathing out.

Take your time

This is a very controlled exercise. As the heart rate goes up so much you might have to breathe a few times between repetitions. Usually I recommend to breathe in through the nose. I have observed myself and noticed that in this exercise I'm breathing a lot through the mouth. And it actually doesn't matter as long as you get enough oxygen.